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SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

APRIL-JUNE 2010 QUARTERLY REPORT



APRIL 2010

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by ARD, Inc.

Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development, USAID Contract Number 383-C-00-08-000501-00

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Cover Photo: Government officials from Trincomalee Town and Gravets learn Sinhala.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
ALC	Assistant Land Commissioner
APS	Annual Program Statement
AU	American University
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDF	Community Development Foundation
CDG	Community Development Groups
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
COP	Chief of Party
CORE	Connecting Regional Economies Program
COTR	Contractor's Technical Representative
CPPHR	Centre for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EP	Eastern Province
FMPC	Forum of Members of Provincial Councils
FR	Fundamental Rights
FY	Fiscal Year
GGRC	Good Governance Resource Centre
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GN	<i>Grama Niladbris</i>
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IHR	Institute for Human Rights
JVP	<i>Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna</i> (People's Liberation Front)
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Legal Aid Commission
LG	Local Governance
LST	Law and Society Trust
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDF	Management for Development Federation
MLGPC	Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Muslim Peace Assembly
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OD	Open Dialogue
OLD	Official Language Department
PC	Provincial Council

PD	Polonnaruwa District
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PS	<i>Pradeshija Sabha</i>
PTF	Presidential Task Force
Q	Quarter
SE	Social Equity
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLPI	Sri Lanka Press Institute
SL R	Sri Lankan Rupee
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
TDJA	Trincomalee District Journalists Association
TDMS	Trincomalee District Media Society
ToT	Training of Trainers
UC	Urban Council
UN	United Nations
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VEGA	Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society

INTRODUCTION

In March 2008, ARD, Inc. was awarded Contract No. 383-C-00-08-000501-00 to implement USAID/Sri Lanka SuRG. The three-to-five-year initiative was designed to build on USAID/Sri Lanka's democracy and governance efforts to address development needs resulting from the ongoing conflict. The program supports regional governance in the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa District by focusing on four program components (social equity (SE), local governance (LG), community empowerment and transformation (CEaT), open dialogue (OD) with intertwining activities that reinforce governance improvements around the betterment of human and community security. After the defeat of the Tamil Tigers (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) in May 2009, the Supporting Regional Governance Program (SuRG) expanded its programming to include the Northern Province.

This report covers the period from April 1–June 30, 2010, and details progress on contract implementation activities and management and administration. Highlights for the quarter include:

- A partner conducted two inter-faith and multi-ethnic dialogue forums on tolerance and reconciliation with the participation of 22 Buddhist monks and nuns, a Catholic priest, a Hindu priest, a Muslim *moulavi*, and 52 lay people from all three communities in Ampara.
- A partner trained 239 women from 10 Women's Rural Development Societies (WRDSs) in documentation and accounts management.
- Nine nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners in the east and Polonnaruwa commenced grant implementation during this quarter.
- Thirty-five representatives from 16 prospective NGO partners from the Eastern Province and the Polonnaruwa District were trained in proposal development. All 16 organizations represented at the workshop submitted proposals for grant awards to SuRG.
- Thirty-one representatives of 11 SuRG partners attended a quarterly review and received training on program implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation.
- Policy briefs on key challenges affecting the provision of shelter were developed and are being used in advocacy efforts targeting government officials, donors and permanent shelter providers
- Three-hundred fifteen persons accessed legal services through projects implemented by SuRG partners.
- Four-hundred forty-two persons accessed non-legal services through projects implemented by partners.
- One-hundred thirty-seven local officials from 38 LAs in the Eastern Province attended a workshop on Office Management, Accounting and Finance.
- One-hundred fifteen officials from 11 SuRG LA partners in Phase 1 language classes completed their 108 hours course in either Tamil or Sinhala.
- Four-hundred forty-nine local government officials from 27 *Pradeshija Sabbas* (PSs) in the Eastern Province continued Tamil and Sinhala language training in this quarter.
- One-hundred sixty-two participants attended a Southern Province Consultation on regional governance, provincial councils and the 13th Amendment.

I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

I.1 SOCIAL EQUITY

The SuRG Social Equity (SE) team continued to support and monitor ongoing partner activities with partners. The team also worked with a partner on closing out its grant under which activities were completed during this quarter.

In addition, SE team members traveled to Vavuniya and Mannar to meet with the Bar Association Presidents, key members of the Bar Associations, district judges and magistrates, as well as lawyers from the Legal Aid Commission and Human Rights Commission offices. The visit revealed a need for information and capacity and skills building for lawyers and judges on a range of emerging post-conflict legal issues including:

- Legal consequences of conflict-related deaths and disappearances, namely issues relating to proof of death in order to obtain a death certificate, succession, inheritance of property, and the custody and adoption of minors whose parents died during the conflict.
- Issues relating to land and property, namely proof of ownership and/or possession of private and state lands, dealing with issues of secondary possession and prescriptive title to land.
- Criminal law issues.

In response, in August 2010, SuRG will conduct the first in a series of training workshops for lawyers on emerging legal issues in the north and east of Sri Lanka. The first workshop on issues relating to conflict-related deaths and disappearances will be attended by 30 lawyers from Jaffna, Mannar, and Vavuniya districts. Participants for this workshop were identified with the assistance of the Bar Associations of each district. All workshops in the series will be conducted in Tamil.

I.1.1 Grants and Subcontracts

The SE team continues to work with the prospective partners in Jaffna and in Batticaloa on the development of two new grants. One is proposing a human rights education course and the other has proposed support to the land registry.

The team is also finalizing proposals for follow-up grants. In addition, in an effort to enhance grantee human rights education curriculum and teaching methodologies, SuRG will commission additional support to partners for their human rights education programs. SuRG support will provide technical assistance to develop each grantee's curriculum for human rights diploma and certificate courses and provide each partner with in-house training on the use of participatory learner-centered techniques.

ARD010

The partner conducted two assessment missions to Jaffna, Mannar, and Vavuniya to assess training needs and develop contacts amongst Grama Niladhris (GN), Land Commission officials, NGOs, and United Nations (UN) agencies who are engaged in the provision of shelter. The assessment clearly indicated a general lack of knowledge amongst GNs, staff from NGOs, and UN agencies on housing, land, restitution policies, and standards. Based upon these findings, the partner is currently developing training materials for workshops for GNs in Jaffna and Vavuniya, which will be conducted during the next quarter. The partner has contacted the Presidential Task Force (PTF) and requested approval to conduct this training program for Grama Niladhris on land restitution policies and standards in Jaffna.

During this quarter the partner also produced a policy brief on the level of tenure security required for different shelter options which will be used as part of their advocacy efforts to inform donors and permanent shelter providers. This policy brief was shared with members of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' lead Protection Working Group and Land Task Force. A second policy brief, which examines key challenges affecting the provision of shelter and challenges related to security of tenure, was also produced and will be used in general advocacy interventions. Wider dissemination of these briefs will be carried out with key government officials, individual donors and shelter providers in the next quarter.

A series of individual interviews were held with a number of stakeholders including the World Bank, UN-Habitat, and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to discuss issues relating to shelter and tenure. The interviews serve as a means to understand how various actors are approaching issues of land and to mobilize consensus on possible solutions.

Field research for a report on land distribution patterns and the validity of colonization claims in the Eastern Province has been completed. Approximately 15 case studies provide examples of claims of colonization or settlement by various ethnic groups either as a result of new settlements, shifting political boundaries, or government officials granting or denying land to different ethnic groups. Although these claims cannot be verified, the research does demonstrate that the current environment creates a situation which exacerbates uncertainty and suspicion amongst ethnic groups due to the absence of clear policies and plans for the use, management and control of land in the Eastern Province. The partner will present the findings of the field research to SuRG during this quarter and during the discussion that follows, will determine how the findings should be most effectively presented to inform advocacy interventions.

ARD022

The partner continued to focus on community development work and advocacy through its Community Development Groups (CDGs) in a total of 39 villages located in Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Ampara, Mannar, Vavuniya, Jaffna, Polonnaruwa, and Hatton.

The CDGs conducted voter education programs prior to the general election through the distribution of flyers urging citizens to exercise their right to vote and through the performances of street theatre groups in strategic locations. In addition, some of the members of the CDGs worked with Grama Niladhris to register eligible voters in their villages.

The CDG-HRDs also organized *shramadana*¹ activities in their villages to bring the community together. These activities ranged from cleaning places of religious worship, preschools, and common public areas to repairing access roads, wells, and water sources.

Activities during this quarter continued to focus on advocacy and community development as it was considered to be too risky to implement the legal aid component of this grant due to security concerns. Any

¹ Traditional volunteer community works.

project activities in the newly resettled areas of Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna, Trincomalee, and Batticaloa require the prior approval of the GNs of the area or, in some cases, the government agent and are carefully monitored.

ARD005

The grant was concluded during this quarter on April 30, 2010 and ARD is currently negotiating and finalizing a follow-up grant.

Over the past year, the partner has provided legal advice and assistance to 142 persons and legal representation services for 117 (66 ongoing and 51 new) cases including fundamental rights, magistrate court cases, high court cases, and one court of appeal case. Thirteen cases were successfully concluded during this grant.

The partner also conducted a capacity building workshop for 53 panel lawyers from the Eastern, Northern, and Central Provinces. Current human rights issues, relevant procedural mechanisms and strategic approaches to seeking local and international legal remedies for violations of human rights was examined and discussed. The workshop was facilitated by a resource person from the Asian Human Rights Commission together with local human rights lawyers and activists.

The partner has continued to provide legal assistance throughout the duration of this grant in spite of challenges, which include but are not limited to, reluctance of detainees to admit when confessions were obtained through coercion; lack of privacy when consulting with detainees; translation and communication difficulties for cases transferred from the Jaffna High Court to the Anuradhapura High Court; increasing incidents of surrenderees being sent to a detention center, even though the Court has ordered they be sent to a rehabilitation center; confusion over procedures and status of surrenderees and the process of ordering rehabilitation; and undue delays in indictments due to restrictions on a Magistrate's power to indict a person under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations.

ARD017

The partner commenced implementing activities of the "Peace through Community Self-Protection and Inter-Communal Dialogue" project during this reporting period. Training of trainers (ToT) programs were conducted to build the capacity of 22 community facilitators from 10 project villages. The ToT focused on community mobilization, facilitation of groups, non-violent communication, peace building, negotiation, and human rights awareness.

Community peace building meetings were held in 10 villages and issues regarding women's and children's rights were discussed. In addition, the participants carried out *shramadana* in four villages.

As part of the community information early warning system network, 25 messages were disseminated via mobile phone to 50 contacts.

Legal services were provided to 74 persons. Issues ranged from documents and procedures to obtain birth certificates, maintenance, and documentation regarding ownership of property. Eleven cases were referred to service providers for the provision of legal aid, of which nine cases are claims for maintenance and two cases are requests for a divorce.

ARD020

The partner commenced implementation of activities under all project components of its "Raising Awareness of Human Rights in Vulnerable Communities of Ampara District" during this quarter. A series of 19 human rights awareness-raising sessions was held in eight villages. The sessions focused on raising awareness on basic human rights, fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Sri Lanka, the right to equality, and women's and child rights. These sessions were attended by 187 persons (150 women and 37 men); the majority of whom were women from the Muslim community. Participants were drawn from Women's Rural

Development Societies (WRDSs), Fisheries Societies, Rural Development Societies, Youth Clubs, and local community based organizations.

Seventy-eight persons availed themselves of the services offered by four mobile legal services clinics. The partner's team of lawyers was able to settle 38 cases through the provision of legal advice and by counseling parties who consulted them. Issues dealt with included documentation and advice on the procedure to obtain birth certificates, issues relating to the payment of spousal and child maintenance and property disputes. Forty cases were documented and deemed to require legal representation in the courts; of this number eight cases have been filed in the courts by lawyers retained by the partner.

The partner commenced activities to establish its Diploma in Human Right, which targets young people between the ages of 18–35 years. Planning sessions were held with resource persons who will conduct the individual sessions over a period of six months. The course was advertised locally on public notice boards and through the partner's network in the Ampara District. Eighty-two applications were received. Review of the applications and interviews with individual applicants resulted in 40 youth being selected to participate in the course. Sixteen of the participants are women, 25 participants are Tamil, and 15 are Muslim.

ARD021

The partner commenced implementation of its “Raising Awareness of Human Rights amongst Vulnerable Women and Adolescents in Ampara District” project during this quarter. Under the Strengthening Women's Rights component of this project, 12 awareness-raising sessions were held on gender relations, gender equality, gender-based violence, and human rights. Participants consisted of 90 women from six villages who are members of the Women's Rural Development Societies, *Samurthi*² Societies, NGOs, and youth clubs.

The project also provided 53 women from six villages with access to psychosocial counseling services. Over 60 percent of the women counseled are survivors of domestic abuse. Counseling services were provided to each of the 53 women individually.

In addition, support groups were set up amongst women in the six villages. The support groups meet monthly and provide women with a safe space to share their experiences, discuss their problems, and seek support from each other. Eight support group meetings were held during this quarter. Four women survivors of domestic abuse who were interested in pursuing their legal options were referred to the Legal Aid Commission's office.

Three mobile legal services clinics were held in three Divisional Secretariat (DS) divisions during this reporting period with the assistance of lawyers from the Legal Aid Commission's office. One-hundred and twenty-eight persons were provided with legal advice on issues relating to birth, marriage and death certificates, and land documentation. Thirty-one cases will require follow-up in terms of documentation and referral to the Legal Aid Commission (LAC).



² Social Wellbeing.

Under the Rights Awareness Raising and Support for Vulnerable Adolescents component of this project, the partner conducted six awareness-raising workshops on leadership skills and non-violent communication, which was attended by 112 youth from six villages. Fifty-five of the participants were girls.

I.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The CEaT team continued its work with grantees including supporting new APS grantees and reviewing lessons learned and best practices from the Anangu project which ended this quarter, and the “Promoting Social Engagement through Buddhist Practice” project which will end next quarter. The CEaT team also took the lead in developing capacity building and training activities for new and prospective grantees.

I.2.1 National Grants

ARD004

The “Building Muslim Consensus” project ended last quarter. The partner submitted a proposal to continue activities with additional funding from SuRG; however, the proposal comes at a time when the partner is in the midst of significant reorganization and seeking new legal registration in order to better position itself as a truly civic rather than political organization that can better represent the Muslim community in the current context. Furthermore, as the partner currently has no other donors, SuRG would be required to stand up the entire organization rather than just fund a project. After a review of the previous grant and the partner’s current status, USAID decided that no further grant should be awarded to the partner until it completes their reorganization and finalizes any change in legal status.

SuRG had planned to provide significant technical assistance to the partner over the course of this calendar year through a grant to the American University (AU). ARD submitted the grant proposal to USAID in December 2009, but has not yet received any official response. In light of the partner’s dramatically different needs, SuRG is now discussing technical support to the partner for strategic and organizational planning through a short-term technical assistance contract to the proposed technical lead on AU’s grant proposal to SuRG.

ARD006

The partner’s grant for its Anangu project ended in May. Over the course of the last year, the partner implemented a range of activities with 11,344 women members of 110 WRDSs from the districts of Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Puttalam, and Jaffna. The project was designed to empower women to take a more active role in community development and local government through better functioning and more active WRDSs in project districts. Activities aimed both to increase the institutional development of WRDSs and provide WRDS members with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to run their WRDSs and take a proactive role in voicing and addressing women’s and local community concerns. The chart below summarizes the key activities conducted under the Anangu project.

Key Activities and Participants			
Program	Events	Participants	WRDSs
Documentation Training	55	1,010	55
Accounting Training	54	1,560	55
Proposal Development Training	30	833	30
Gender Training	27	1,106	27
Study Circles	135	791	27
Film Circles	140	948	28
Street Dramas	10	3000+	10
<i>Kutti Arasanagam</i> Discussion sessions	12	298	12

The 110 project WRDSs included societies at varying levels of institutional development ranging from those with virtually no organizational structure and limited membership to registered WRDSs widely representative

of the local female population. Participating WRDSs conducted and participated in project activities that were relevant to their need. Project activities included a variety of trainings—accounting, bookkeeping, proposal development, meeting management, banking—focused on ensuring proper administration and sustainability of WRDSs. During the course of the project, a total of 14 project WRDSs were registered with the relevant government authority and an additional eight have filed the necessary paperwork and are awaiting approval of their registration. The partner also helped 20 project WRDSs to open and manage a society bank account.

Eleven WRDSs received funding from donor and government agencies based on proposals developed with the partner's support. An additional 11 WRDSs developed and submitted proposals and are still awaiting a response on funding.

Activities focused on gender were organized to empower women members of the WRDS as well as to educate the broader community about gender and legitimize women's participation in community decision making and development. Gender training held for members of 27 WRDSs introduced the participants to issues such as gender and sex, power relations around gender, and gender-based violence. In addition, during the training programs, participants identified relevant government and nongovernmental organizations in their community and regions working on their concerns such as child care, women's education, and discrimination against women. Awareness-raising readers and film circles were held in 41 communities. Eight hundred women participated in these sessions which were organized to not only provide participants with new information and understanding on women's issues but also encourage them to engage in their communities. For example, after participating in these discussions, one WRDS in Puttalam, with the support of several neighboring WRDSs, initiated its own awareness creation campaign on gender-based violence.

Key to the project's strategy is an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities and how women as community members and the WRDS as a community institution can influence local authorities and advocate on behalf of the community. In training and awareness-raising in 12 WRDSs based on the partners' *Kutty Arasangam* (Good Governance), women were encouraged to engage and raise issues with their local authorities. As a result, women in four communities held discussions with their local authorities and resolved concerns regarding garbage collection; two WRDSs requested and received the annual plan and budget from its local authority; and another WRDS was awarded a contract by their local authority worth 800,000 LRS for the construction of a road in their village.

WRDSs have also utilized formal letters to call relevant government officials' attention to problems faced at the community level. One WRDS raised the issue of a shortage of teachers at the local school with the Zonal Director of Education and lodged a complaint with the Human Rights Commission. At the time of reporting, all teacher vacancies at the school have been filled.

In addition, WRDSs have themselves assumed the responsibility of creating awareness on issues related to good governance and the responsibilities of the local authorities through the staging of street dramas. Performed for the public, these dramas raised issues related to their respective locale and have encouraged women to raise their concerns with the relevant local authority.

At the start of the project, a key problem faced by many project WRDSs was low membership. Through active mobilization, awareness creation and training, project WRDSs have shown a significant increase in membership. For example, in one WRDS in Jaffna membership increased from 20 women to 270 members.

The partner also began the process of bringing together the WRDSs by district to form a WRDS Federation. Regional meetings to start this process were held in Batticaloa and Puttalam.

SuRG is currently discussing a second grant with the partner to continue its work with WRDSs. In formulating a more effective and efficient program, SuRG and the partner are analyzing the lessons learned from the first grant. The program has proven that an externally designed capacity building program geared to increase the institutional capacity of WRDSs is necessary and effective. Basic administration procedures, including writing minutes, opening bank accounts, and bookkeeping, have been instrumental in improving the administrative capacity of many project WRDSs. Funding secured for community works and projects has

also gone a long way towards building the credibility of members and their societies as legitimate representatives of their communities. Awareness-raising and discussions led by women on good governance has also been important to building legitimacy and empowering the women involved. For example, 11 women from Batticaloa District were invited to join local authority Advisory Boards.

Non-traditional means of awareness-raising such as film and readers circles have proven very effective ways to raise and discuss sensitive but important issues, such as domestic violence and women's participation in politics.

However, challenges in implementation were many. By taking on so many WRDSs, support given to each WRDS varied considerably. Field staff was stretched and management support from Colombo was not sufficient to equally engage all project WRDSs or provide the level of ongoing guidance field staff required.

CWRP

The CWRP, funded by SuRG through a purchase order, early this fiscal year continued its signature campaign to advocate for a 25 percent quota of women nominees for local government elections. This quarter the focus throughout Sri Lanka on general elections held in April limited attention around questions of local government election reform.

Nonetheless, the CWRP worked with the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities and the Young Councilors' National Association to develop a policy brief on women and youth representation in local government elected bodies. The brief proposes a legislative clause to amend section 65 (a) of the local government elections ordinance of 1989 as follows:

"in order to qualify for the selection of any of their candidates on the basis of proportional representation, a political party has to demonstrate that the list of candidates put forward by that party for the election to the local authority consists of no less than 25% of women, and no less than 25% of youth under the age of 35."

A petition with 74,761 signatures from all nine provinces in support of this reform was presented to the new Minister of Local Authorities and Provincial Council with copies to political leaders. This move to promote a quota of women in local government elections and the petition were covered in the English language daily newspaper, the *Daily Mirror*, and the *Divaina*—a national Sinhala daily newspaper.

The signature campaign also continued this quarter with an awareness creation session preceding the signing of the petition by women leaders of the United National Party. The event was hosted at party headquarters during the first week of June. The number of signatures collected to date is now at 74,761 with the addition of 560 signatures collected at this event. A similar and final signature campaign event will be held next quarter with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

ARD023

During the quarter, the partner continued its dialogue and community engagement with Buddhist clergy from Ampara, Polonnaruwa, and Monaragula. The success of the program is borne out by the increasing number of participants. The program target of 100 monks and nuns has been surpassed with a total of 141 clergy members involved in the program by the end of this quarter.

Eight dialogues were held in sessions among participating clergy in Polonnaruwa and Monaragula, focusing on Buddhism in contemporary Sri Lankan society, democracy, human rights and other relevant issues. In general, the educational standards in Sri Lanka's *Pirivenas*,³ where Buddhist clergy are educated, are low, the curriculum is narrow and rarely updated, and teaching techniques are rigid. Furthermore, most clergy, upon completion of their *Privena* education, confine themselves to the temples of their village. These dialogues

³ Buddhist learning centers.

Buddhist Clergy Discuss Gender Inequality

On April 27, a dialogue forum for Buddhist clergy in Monaragala quickly transformed from a session on the role of the clergy in society to one on gender equity.

The turn of events was brought about when the Chief Priest of the hosting center, due to lack of space, invited the nuns present to partake of alms first—considered a deviation from the book of rules governing the clergy which grants Buddhist monks a higher position and in practice, unheard of.

In the post-luncheon session, a young monk questioned why and how the nuns were offered alms first, as this clearly goes against the book of rules. The Chief Priest stood firm stating that as host the nuns were guests and he had every right to invite them to take alms first.

The nuns took the opportunity to express their dismay on the “double standard” employed by both the clergy and the government in their treatment of nuns. Instances of discrimination and problems faced by nuns in their daily lives were discussed. “In many places in Sri Lanka, the term ‘nun’ has become a banned word. We have no support from the government. Of late, the government has stopped issuing us the national identity card as well.”

The discussion, a first for most of the nuns and monks present, concluded with a mutual agreement that monks should stand up and take a proactive stand in favor of the rights of nuns if the clergy is to maintain its credibility and respect within Sri Lankan society.

Also of particular note in project activities is the inclusion of nuns in the program and gender equity within the Buddhist clergy among the issues discussed. Nuns face significant discrimination within the religious order. The creation of an environment in which nuns’ participation in dialogue and discussions has led to greater participation by nuns than originally envisioned and led many monks to consider issues of gender equity in the religious order as well as in larger society for the first time. This is very rare and an important project achievement.

forums, led by leading academics, provide participating clergy with new and contemporary knowledge and ideas. Sessions this quarter were all led by a leading academic.

In Ampara, the partner had concluded its dialogue forums on social issues for the clergy last quarter. This quarter they held two dialogue forums which included the participation of lay people. These forums—one focused on “Religious and Ethnic Tolerance” and another on “National Reconciliation”—included the participation of Hindu, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders and 18 Sinhala, 23 Tamil, and 11 Muslim lay people. The meetings provided a rare opportunity for members of all three communities to discuss concerns and common problems. As one participant remarked,

“There is a strong connection between the Sinhala, Muslim, and Tamil communities, but we have not understood this fully. What we can do as religious leaders is discuss and talk about the issues people have and agree on means to address these problems. Our aim should not be to live as different ethnic and religious groups, but to co-exist and live together as one group.”

Participants identified the need to speak with one voice to local authorities about issues and requested the partner facilitate this discussion. They also discussed the possibility of organizing a multi-ethnic community-based organization.

While successful, these first meetings in Ampara also highlighted the need for caution and care in managing these meetings. Issues such as access to land and water, which came up in the discussions, are politically sensitive and tied closely to long-standing inter-ethnic tensions. So if discussions are not handled and facilitated carefully they risk exacerbating rather than mitigating tension.



Buddhists nuns participate in Dialogue Forums.

The partner also continued its Tamil language classes this quarter, expanding the program from the two planned courses to three courses—two in Monaragala and one in Polonnaruwa—at the request of participating clergy. Thirty-eight monks and 14 nuns are regularly attending classes.

This program is, albeit on a small scale, breaking new ground and as such, raises a number of challenges. The partner has had difficulties attracting young monks (between the ages of 18–35) to participate in the program, as many have migrated to the cities in pursuit of higher education. The partner responded by increasing the age limit to 50 and by targeting the Buddhist educational centers as venues to conduct dialogue forums rather than just individual temples in a specified area. Furthermore, the responsibilities and duties of the clergy within their communities and their temples are numerous and time-consuming. This has hampered scheduling of the dialogue forums.

1.2.2 Local Grants

The CEaT team worked closely with APS grantees to support start-up implementation of their grant activities aimed at increasing space for diversity and inclusiveness across communities and creating space for diverse communities to voice their concerns and advocate for change. As implementation for these grantees just got underway this quarter, activities focused primarily on introducing the organization and project to target communities and officials and identifying target groups and participants for their activities through group formation and awareness-raising.

In addition, grantees held several training events and cultural activities during the quarter to engage and bring together diverse target communities and beneficiaries. As these activities got underway, common challenges emerged including overcoming suspicion and convincing community members of the value of these activities without the benefit of any material support to participants or communities.

ARD016

The partner commenced its “Relationship Building between Diverse Social Groups in Tamil and Muslim Communities” project this quarter. The project aims to build trust and enhance communication among Muslims and Tamils in eight communities in Batticaloa. The partner started work by engaging 282 Muslim and Tamil members of farmers and fishermen societies, youth groups, WRDSs, and religious leaders in four project orientation meetings. Orientation was followed up by sectoral meetings with WRDSs, youth groups, and fishery societies. Three WRDSs decided at their sectoral meeting to initiate the process for registration. Two youth groups engaged the area Sports Officer to address a conflict regarding an upcoming sports competition at their sectoral meeting. The Sports Officer also agreed to help register the sports group.

The partner also conducted 23 awareness-raising sessions attended by 366 Tamils and Muslims on one of the following topics: conflict management and mitigation, coexistence and peace building, non-violent communication and negotiation skills, and Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity.

Shramadanas were organized—one to clean a Muslim cemetery and one to clean a damaged water channel. Although most of the 100 people attending the first *shramadana* to clean the cemetery were Muslim, the second event was attended by a virtually equal amount of Muslims and Tamils.

ARD015

The partner initiated its project, “Engaging People’s Fora and Local Authorities to Empower Communities” in the Polonnaruwa this quarter. Activities included selection of 100 village leaders from 10 GN divisions. Those selected include leaders of local community-based organization (CBOs), religious leaders and retired government officers. Once selected, participants attended leadership training focused on community mobilization, the role of informal and formal leaders in a village, mechanisms to engage diverse stakeholders, engaging local authorities (LAs), and promoting community interests in a non-political manner.

After completion of the training, four representatives from each of the 10 GN divisions were chosen to be chairperson, treasurer, secretary, and coordinator of a 40-person steering committee representing each GN. These four representatives from each GN will represent their communities on their respective LA standing committees. These LA standing committees—Finance and Policy; Housing, and Community Development; Technical Services; and Environmental Services—are expected to include community representation. To date in the project LA, there has been no community representation on these committees.

In addition to working with community members, the partner also reached out to local officials with training for 12 elected members of the LA. The training covered good governance, the role and responsibilities of LAs, and community participation. Training was also held for 25 LA staff members. This training focused on their roles and responsibilities in the LA with a particular emphasis on their obligation and techniques to work with the public.

ARD014

The partner initiated its “Community Empowerment and Mobilization for Muslim and Sinhalese Coexistence Project” with program orientation for 370 community members from the seven project villages in the Polonnaruwa District. The project will be implemented through small village groups (150 members formed 29 groups in five villages this quarter). Selected members of each of these groups have formed 50 Village Committees through which issues of common concern raised in the small groups can be addressed and then raised in larger divisional meetings. Issues already raised in early meetings include the need for a better system for drinking water; access to legal documents, such as birth certificates and national identity cards; and obtaining support from government officials to address community needs.

In an effort to build trust and relations among Muslims and Sinhalese, the partner organized a New Year’s festival, hosted by the Muslim community and attended by both Muslim and Buddhist religious leaders and community members. The event included traditional cultural activities and a sports competition. This was the first time in decades that these two communities came together in this type of cultural event.



ARD011

Working in ethnically diverse communities of, the partner’s “Promoting Peaceful Community Co-existence Through Social Mobilization of Women’s and Youth Groups” got underway this quarter with the formation of 14 women’s groups and 13 youth groups from 13 villages.

Once the groups were organized, the partner organized a two-day gender awareness raising program for 42 women. The program focused on the role and importance of women’s participation in local communities and development. In 12 meetings held with youth groups the 367 youth discussed their concerns about unemployment, lack of technical skills, and illicit alcohol and alcohol abuse by youth in their communities.

ARD012

The partner’s “Promoting Peaceful Co-Existence through Multi-Ethnic Community Participation” project aims to promote coexistence among all three communities in Trincomalee. Activities got underway with the establishment of 15 youth groups and 15 peace committees.

In 28 meetings held with the youth groups, participants discussed issues and concerns of local youth. Alcoholism among the youth was considered a priority problem and the partner plans to reach out to the Excise Department and local police to support youth action against alcoholism.

In the 11 meetings held with Peace Committees, Sinhalese raised concerns about irrigated water that is not being channeled to their paddy fields. Muslims and Tamils raised issues about land encroachment by the Sinhalese.

1.2.3 Capacity Building and Training

QUARTERLY GRANTEE REVIEW

The CEaT team also took the lead in developing capacity building and training activities for new and prospective grantees. A quarterly review meeting, attended by 31 representatives from 11 grantee organizations, was held at the end of the quarter to give grantees an opportunity to learn about each other's programs, to discuss lessons learned to date, challenges, and opportunities. During the workshop, grantees presented their program plans, achievements to date, and challenges. Areas of common concern, especially among local grantees, include commitment from community members to attend activities when there is no material support for them or their communities involved (e.g., livelihoods, microfinance, small infrastructure). All grantees were concerned about SuRG reporting and their ability to provide and verify the information with the level of detail required in the timeframe required by SuRG.

During the workshop, SuRG staff worked with grantees both as a group and in meetings with each organization on financial management, compliance, and record keeping. SuRG's Sr. Program Manager for M&E and MSI's M&E technical advisor for SuRG from Washington conducted sessions on M&E. The sessions included a broad discussion on how an M&E system can support program implementation as well as a discussion on SuRG monitoring forms and techniques to guard against double counting beneficiaries.

The workshop also included a session on USAID branding requirements, on communicating program achievements in USAID success story format, and tips for taking compelling photographs.

By the end of the workshop, each partner completed a revised work plan for the upcoming quarter taking into account strategies and techniques recommend by both SuRG staff and other grantees.

TRAINING FOR TEACHING TAMIL OR SINHALA AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

SuRG organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop for grantee language teachers. Language training is a key component in numerous SuRG grants. The three-day residential workshop provided teachers with an opportunity to share experiences, techniques, and materials. Sixteen teachers representing seven SuRG partner organizations participated in the program held in May. The workshop was led by a senior lecturer



SuRG partner organizes Peace Committees and Youth Groups for community reconciliation in Trincomalee District.



Representatives from 16 organizations in the east and Polonnaruwa attend a proposal development workshop.

from the Linguistics Department of Kelaniya University along with two staff members from the Official Language Department (OLD).

The program focused on teaching methodology and course content that is appropriate for teaching in communities rather than formal educational programs. Emphasis was placed on oral communication techniques, and all participants were given textbooks providing a standard curriculum for teaching both languages.

1.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

SuRG signed a subcontract with EML Consultants on April 1 to begin training for all 37 PSs and the Ampara Urban Council (UC). EML immediately set up a unit to implement the program at the EML head office in Colombo and in Ampara. They will operate out of the SuRG office in Trincomalee and set up an office in Batticaloa early next quarter. Core project staff (Team Leader, Project Office Coordinator, Workshop Coordinator, Community Development Coordinator and District Field Officers) were recruited and began work this quarter. EML started implementation with an orientation meeting for the Commissioner of Local Government Eastern Province (CLG).

It has been brought to my notice that USAID is supporting the local authorities in the Eastern Province with trainings on a range of topics relevant to their administration and management. The sessions are not just for sharing knowledge but to have a very strong practical component which is most useful for the LA staff. This kind of support is most essential and relevant. I hope this is continued in the future and that it can hopefully be extended to the Northern Province as well.

– Dr. Nihal Jayathilake, Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils at the Ministry’s monthly donor coordination meeting

In June, EML implemented its second technical training module, “Office Management, Accounting and Finance.” Two workshops were held for Chairmen, Secretaries, and the relevant Management Assistants of 38 Local Authorities in the east. The training included accounting procedures, preparing and developing cash flows, annual budgets, final accounts, management concepts, basic management theories and practice, and various other aspects of office management including office layouts. The course content was designed with input from the Eastern Province CLG and the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government.

These workshops, like all workshops in the training series, were developed so that participants not only learn the subject matter but will be able to serve as resource persons for other staff in their PSs after training. The methodology is participatory to evoke cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences of participants. Training techniques include case studies, role plays, lessons learned, and best practices in a mix of plenary and break-out sessions. EML staff and consultants, SuRG local government staff, and external resource persons conducted the five-day residential training programs.

A key element in this workshop was the demonstration of an accounting and finance management database developed by an accounting officer, T. Muralidharan, of the Ambagamuwa Pradeshiya Sabha. A practical session using computers and fictitious data was conducted as a group exercise. The database is being modified to incorporate the advice of Ministry and LA financial specialists and will be finalized in two languages (Sinhala and Tamil) and, with SuRG support, distributed to all the Eastern Province PSs and the Ampara UC. EML will then hold a workshop for implementation of the database as well as provide on-the-job training to staff of all 11 SuRG partner LAs on the use of the database.

Participants in LA Office Management, Accounting and Finance Training by Gender and Ethnic Group					
Total Participants	Female	Male	Tamil	Muslim	Sinhala
137	26	111	57	32	48

In addition to training, SuRG continued to provide hands-on assistance to our 11 partner LAs. Monthly working groups in each of the LAs met regularly—33 meetings were held during the quarter. The proposed

language classes post-evaluation examination as well as expected SuRG training and technical assistance needs for 2010 were discussed during the meetings. EML field staff joined SuRG at these meetings.

At the request of the Assistant Commissioner for Local Government (ACLG) in Trincomalee, SuRG is supporting the printing of a quarterly newsletter put out by the Good Governance Resource Center of Trincomalee District. The newsletter, distributed to all LAs and other relevant officials in the district, provides information on special activities conducted in the local government sector, ongoing and new programs, and events and details of district LA initiatives. It is published in Tamil and Sinhala. SuRG will contribute a brief write-up on relevant project activities and issues in each newsletter. The first issue included an article and picture on the SuRG language program for LA officials.

At the central level, SuRG coordinated with USAID and the Ministry of Local Government to organize a ceremony to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry and SuRG formalizing relations. Although the MOU was prepared and approved early last quarter, the signing ceremony was delayed at the request of the Ministry until the new Minister and his staff could be appointed and settle into their positions. The MOU is scheduled to be signed early next quarter in the presence of the Minister of Local Government and Provincial Councils and the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka.

Each month the Ministry of Local Government conducts a progress review meeting in Colombo with Ministry Secretaries, all Commissioners of Local Government and cooperating donors. SuRG staff attends these meetings regularly.

1.3.1 Language Training

Language training for staff from all of SuRG's 11 partner LAs was completed this quarter. SuRG has arranged for the Official Language Department to hold a post-evaluation examination on July 24, 2010 for the 115 officials who completed the course.

The second phase of language classes for the remaining 27 PSs in the province began last quarter and will continue until late next quarter.

1.4 OPEN DIALOGUE

1.4.1 Grants

ARD031

Scholarship recipients at the Sri Lanka Journalism Diploma Programme 2010 continued their course this quarter. Three of the 26 scholarship recipients dropped out of the program this quarter after obtaining opportunities to study abroad. In this quarter's semester, students will continue with their lecture program and begin internships.

SuRG Local Government team coordinates with other USAID initiatives in Trincomalee

–USAID/Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA)–

The Trincomalee Assistant Commissioner for Local Government (ACLG), in one of his regular meetings with the SuRG local government team, asked SuRG to provide technical assistance to the Trincomalee Urban Council in solid waste management. Since this is outside of SuRG's mandate, the team contacted USAID's VEGA project and hosted a visit for them to meet the ACLG and the UC Chairmen and see the solid waste management site. After the visit, VEGA was able to arrange for a Tamil speaking volunteer from India to come to Trincomalee and work with the UC on a strategy and action plan for solid waste management.

–USAID/Connecting Regional Economies Program (CORE)–

When USAID's CORE project began a new initiative on soya bean cultivation and marketing in areas of Trincomalee where they had not previously worked, CORE staff reached out to SuRG to engage our local authority partners in the process. SuRG provided contacts and introductions in each of our partner LAs in the district, namely Thambalagamuwa, Vergul, and Seruvila, as well as with a SRDO, one of our APS civil society partners. Those contacts helped CORE to identify 60 farmers who they are now working with on the cultivation of 35 acres of soya bean.

ARD025

The partner restarted its provincial consultations this quarter after the completion of the elections with a meeting in the Southern Province on June 7, 2010 in Galle. Although there was much support from provincial authorities, including the Chief Minister who wrote and encouraged all members of the Provincial Council (PC) to attend, there were only a few PC members of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in attendance due to a party meeting scheduled at the last minute for the same date.

Nonetheless, 162 people participated in the consultation, including one provincial minister, six PC members from the ruling party, the leader of the opposition, 11 PC members of the opposition, PC officials, members of local authorities (one deputy mayor, one municipal council member, a deputy chairman of a UC, one UC member, one chairman, and five members of *Pradeshija Sabhas*), clergy, civil society activists, political activists, trade unionists from the plantation sector, representatives of farmer organizations, professionals, and media. It should be noted that among the PC members who participated from the opposition were two members of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front) (JVP), a party strongly opposed to devolution.

A heated dialogue on the principle of devolution and other key issues and proposals by participants on how the 13th Amendment should be implemented within the present constitutional framework were initiated in response to the following four presentations:

- “13th Amendment - Legal Issues and Problems.”
- “Fiscal Aspects of Devolution.”
- “Provincial Councils, Land and Development; Problems and Challenges.”
- “The Experiences of the Provincial Councils System.”

Handouts of the presentations and copies of the 13th Amendment were made available for all participants.

Regional Consultations Spur Formation of Forum for Members of Provincial Councils

Partner provincial consultations on regional governance and the role of the provincial council brings together members of provincial councils, local and national politicians, policy makers, constitutional experts, and government officers in each province. After participating in such a consultation members of several PCs came together across party lines and approached the partner about setting up the Forum of Members of Provincial Councils (FMPC). The inaugural meeting was held in Kandy with 16 councilors from both ruling and opposition parties representing seven provinces in attendance. A pro-tem committee of office bearers was elected at this meeting. The committee includes members of both the ruling and opposition parties. Since then, many more members of Provincial Councils have indicated their willingness to join the FMPC.

Later this year, the Forum plans to organize a workshop and a national meeting for approximately 450 PC members.

The remaining four consultations are planned for next quarter: Uva Province in July; Northern Province in August; and the Eastern and Western Provinces in September.

The partner's booklet on regional governance is currently in draft and being reviewed by the editors and by two resource persons. The draft is expected to be finalized and translated next quarter for printing in September. Newspaper articles summarizing the booklet are also planned for late September.

ARD013

The partner initiated its “Strengthening Media in Trincomalee District” project with the Trincomalee District Journalist Association (TDJA), now renamed the Trincomalee District Media Society (TDMS). After consultations with a diverse group of stakeholders and community leaders including lawyers, a former Chief Secretary and Chairman of the NGO Consortium and a member of the Human Rights Commission, a constitution was developed and presented to the TDMS Board of Directors. The constitution is now available

in Sinhala, Tamil, and English. The partner is now working with TDMS to register the organization under the Social Services Department. They expect the registration to be complete by August 2010.

The partner also developed a questionnaire in Tamil and Sinhala for collecting information and developing a database of journalists in the district. Orientation was held for the volunteers who will administer the questionnaire.

Furniture, a computer, a fax machine and a digital camera were purchased for TDMS. The equipment will be turned over to TDMS once they are registered.

I.5 CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES

I.5.1 Annual Program Statement (APS)

At the end of last quarter, 16 organizations from the Eastern Province and Polonnaruwa District were invited to attend a hands-on proposal development workshop in which participants would work on developing the concept notes they submitted to SuRG into full-fledged proposals. Two five-day residential workshops, one in Sinhala and one in Tamil, were conducted in which each organization was expected by the end of the program to have a first draft of their proposal. SuRG staff worked closely with the facilitators, Management for Development Federation (MDF)/South Asia, to ensure that the program was targeted to SuRG requirements and program objectives. Staff also worked closely with participants before the start of the workshop to indicate key questions raised in their concept notes and areas where advance work would be needed so that they could most effectively participate in the program.

“We have recently been awarded funding from USAID/RISEN to implement a model special education program for the Eastern Province. We were able to obtain those funds because when I went to the SuRG proposal development workshop in Kandy, I learned many things which I was able to use for my proposal. Thank you.”

- President, SuRG partner

After attending the workshop, all 16 organizations submitted a proposal to SuRG. Proposals were submitted in Sinhala, Tamil, and English. All proposals are being translated into English for review and selection by a committee of SuRG technical staff and the Chief of Party (COP) in early July. It is expected that after the selection, proposals will require significant revision before they are ready for funding. SuRG plans to provide each selected grantee with on-site technical assistance to expedite this process. An international consultant with extensive field experience in Sri Lanka has been identified to work with SuRG field staff on the development of these grants once selection is completed.

I.6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During the last quarter, MSI’s SuRG M&E Advisor traveled to Sri Lanka to provide technical assistance to the SuRG team, assess grantee performance, and develop outcome instruments for collecting data. She worked with SuRG M&E staff and program officers to update the results framework and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) to reflect changing conditions from when the PMP was developed in October 2008, and to incorporate the new local government strategy.

She worked closely with the M&E team to develop and refine data collection instruments, develop and review protocols for assessing data quality, and review the overall results framework and PMP with staff during their quarterly grantee meeting. MSI also trained SuRG staff in Zoomerang, a third party web-based software used for the collection and analysis of data, primarily for surveys which SuRG is adapting for quarterly reporting and field reporting from staff. MSI also set up end-of-training and post-program surveys and converted project data forms to an online system.

MSI’s M&E Advisor also visited with SuRG’s field offices in the east, meeting with staff and implementing partners in Trincomalee, Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa, and Ampara. She was joined by SuRG’s Senior M&E

Specialist. They met with three partners to discuss data collection strategies and data quality. They observed 12 events held by nine grantees, including language classes, peace committee meetings, widow counseling sessions and a Do No Harm workshop. They met with three WRDSs who received assistance to look at the results of activities on WRDSs and assess the capacity of WRDSs for future funding. They also examined the work of one partner by conducting a focus group and key informant interviews with program participants to make recommendations for future programming.

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